

Serial Number: 10/709,270
Filed: 4/26/2004

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Remarks

Amendments to independent claims 1 and 9, described in detail below, adopt the Examiner's suggestions made in the "response to arguments" at page 4 of the outstanding final rejection dated 4/4/2005, where the Examiner states Applicant has argued that a single "gasket" per mating surface / shell appears but this is not what has been claimed. Therefore, the Examiner held that the claims may alternatively be satisfied by the multiple gaskets/sealing surfaces that appear in the cited reference *Meltsch*. Applicant has clarified the claims language according to the Examiner's suggestion. Therefore, the present amendment requires only cursory review by the Examiner and should be entered (714.13 MPEP).

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 12-15 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over *Dagan* in view of *Meltsch*. The Examiner admits that *Dagan* does not disclose "a gasket mounted to each shell along a mating surface between the shells and along the openings" and supplies *Meltsch* therefore. Applicant respectfully submits that *Meltsch* also fails to disclose, as claims 1 and 9 have been amended, a *single gasket loop* mounted to each shell along a mating surface between the shells and along the openings.

In *Meltsch*, there is a sealing insert 11 (figure 4) or 15 (figure 5) for sealing the mating surface between the shells, identified as the separating plane 4 of the housing (col. 3 lns 24-36). However, as plainly shown in figure 1 and explained in detail at column 2, lines 58-65, the sealing plane 4 of *Meltsch*, is clearly distinct from the cable introduction plane 5 or 5.1 where the openings are sealed by an additional/separate plastic sealant or other sealing means (figures 6-10), independent of the "gasket" along the separation plane.

Because *Meltsch* unmistakably applies a "gasket" to the mating surface along each shell that is separate and independent of a second "gasket" applied around the openings, the cited references fail to disclose teach or suggest a *single gasket loop* mounted to each shell along a mating

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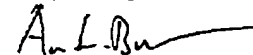
surface between the shells and along the openings. In fact, both cited references teach directly away from this claim limitation. Therefore, rejection of claims 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 12-15 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) is improper.

The Examiner rejected dependent claims 2, 6, 10 and 11 variously by adding additional references to the combination of *Dagan* in view of *Meltsch*. However, none of these additional references discloses or suggests the missing independent claims 1 and 9 element of "a *single gasket loop* mounted to each shell along a mating surface between the shells and along the openings", as described herein above. Therefore, dependent claims 2, 6, 10 and 11 should also be allowable.

The Examiner indicated that claim 4 and 16 would be allowable if rewritten into independent form. Claims 4 and 16 depend from claims 1 and 9, respectively. Therefore because claims 1 and 9, as described herein above, are believed to be allowable as amended, claims 4 and 16 should also be allowable as is.

Having obviated each of the Examiners rejections, applicant respectfully requests that a notice of allowance be issued. Should the Examiner be inclined to issue an Official Action other than the notice of allowance, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner first contact Applicant by telephone at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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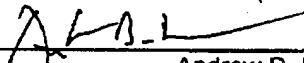
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Andrew D. Babcock